UNANIMOUS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



- 0. UNANIMOUS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION Story Preface
- 1. TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION
- 2. THE BOSTON MASSACRE
- 3. COLONISTS REBEL
- 4. LET IT BEGIN HERE
- 5. LEXINGTON AND CONCORD
- 6. THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL
- 7. WASHINGTON TAKES COMMAND
- 8. AMERICA ESTABLISHES A NAVY
- 9. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION
- 10. THE VOTE: 13-0
- 11. AMERICA'S FIRST DOLLARS
- 12. LONDON'S REACTION
- 13. TREASON
- 14. TREASON MOST FOUL
- 15. EXECUTIONS
- 16. MARION'S BRIGADE
- 17. THE TABLES TURN
- 18. SURRENDER AT YORKTOWN
- 19. GENERAL WASHINGTON RESIGNS

20. UNANIMOUS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



Charles Peale Polk (1767–1822) created this portrait of George Washington, at Princeton, circa 1790. Washington was selected as America's President. We learn, <u>from the National Archives</u>, that he won both of his presidential elections (in 1789 and 1792) virtually unanimously: "For all intents and purposes, Washington was unopposed for election as President. Under the system then in place, votes for Vice President were not differentiated from votes for President."

George Washington was as reluctant to <u>accept</u> the <u>job of President</u> as he was reluctant to become <u>Commanderin-Chief</u>. He had kept his vow to resign at the end of the war and meant to keep his vow never to seek political office.

But when the country he had fought so hard to create was virtually <u>falling apart</u> - because <u>Articles of Confederation uniting the States</u> were <u>weak</u> - Washington <u>relented</u>.

He <u>took office</u> in <u>New York City</u> on <u>April 30, 1789</u> - the only <u>unanimously elected</u> President in the history of the country. (Technically, he wasn't the first. That little-known honor belongs to <u>Samuel Huntington</u> who was President of the Continental Congress when the country first took the name "<u>United States</u>.")

The <u>original</u> of Washington's <u>Inaugural Address</u>, which he also <u>signed</u>, is preserved at the US National Archives. His copy of the Constitution includes an important <u>handwritten addition</u> (to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States") which he made to the oath of office. (That phrase had been proposed by James Madison and George Mason.)

Repeating the oath when he was sworn in, Washington added something else at the end:

So help me God.

Every president thereafter has followed his lead.

Many "firsts" happened while <u>Washington</u> was <u>head of the military</u> and then <u>head of the country</u>. From <u>rebellious colonials</u> who refused to tolerate English Bishops in their new land to idealistic politicians who risked

their lives by severing ties to the Crown, America was the place where people risked much for what they believed.

During the year Washington took command of the Army (1775), another branch of the military - the Marines - was first formed at the <u>old Tun Tavern</u> in Philadelphia, the largest city in the colonies. Proposing the first seal of the new country, Thomas Jefferson did not prevail, although we can still view <u>his designs</u> today.

While historians may never resolve whether <u>Betsy Ross</u> actually created the new country's flag, two original Revolutionary War flags still survive. Follow this link to the tattered flagcarried at the Battle of Stoney Point.

As Commander-in-Chief, General Washington experienced the highs and lows of all his men. From the surrender of Burgoyne and the Redcoats at <u>Saratoga</u> to the <u>fall of Charleston</u>, Washington's strategy and fortitude kept the troops on track. (This link takes you to his copy of General <u>Benjamin Lincoln's letter</u> to Sir Henry Clinton expressing willingness to surrender Charleston - the <u>lowest point</u> of the war.)

The Revolutionary War is a story of how the will to be free can triumph against impossible odds. <u>Many patriots</u> were responsible for transforming America from British-owned colonies into "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Many of the "firsts" which occurred within a short time frame are still part of American life today.

The colonists were not always unanimous, but most agreed on one fundamental objective: Striving to be free was worth the highest price they could pay. And many were called upon to pay it.

NOTE: AwesomeStories gratefully acknowledges Edward J. Krasnoborski who created the wonderful U.S. Military Academy annotated maps linked throughout this story. Mr. Krasnoborski's career, as a cartographer at the Academy, spanned sixty years.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/UNANIMOUS-PRESIDENTIAL-ELECTION-American-Revolution-Highlights

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/UNANIMOUS-PRESIDENTIAL-ELECTION-American-Revolution-Highlights

Media Stream



<u>Election Results - George Washington, President</u> From Harper's Encyclopaedia of United States History from 458 A.D. to 1905.

Courtesy, New York Public Library Digital Collection, image 808898. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Election-Results-George-Washington-President



<u>A New President - Washington to New York</u>
Courtesy New York Public Library, Digital Gallery, image 815006.
View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/A-New-President-Washington-to-New-York



Reception of President Washington at New York

Image online, courtesy Gutenberg.org website.

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http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Reception-of-President-Washington-at-New-York



Washington - Oath of Office

Illustration originally published in Century magazine - April, 1889.

Courtesy, New York Public Library Digital Collection, image 808898.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Washington-Oath-of-Office



<u>Inaugural - First for George Washington</u>

Courtesy, New York Public Library Digital Collection, image 800070.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Inaugural-First-for-George-Washington



<u>First Presidential Mansion - No. 1 Cherry Street</u>

Illustration of First Presidential Mansion - No. 1 Cherry Street, New York - from <u>The Kirk on Rutgers Farm</u>, by Frederick Brückbauer, page 20. Online, courtesy Google Books.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/First-Presidential-Mansion-No.-1-Cherry-Street



<u>George Washington - Taking Control at Cambridge</u>

Illustration by Charles Stanley Reinhart; originally published in ${\it Harper's Weekly}$.

Courtesy, New York Public Library Digital Gallery, image 808520.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/George-Washington-Taking-Control-at-Cambridge



Old Tun Tavern

U.S. National Archives image 127-EX-1-20.

Linked above: Map of Philadelphia's waterfront, including Penn's Landing, courtesy University

of Pennsylvania.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Old-Tun-Tavern

n heraldic phruse. The first gold, and an eutuneled rose, red and white, for England; to the Auranea. MDCCLXXVII. For the reverse, he second white, with a thistic, in its proper colors, for Scotland; the third rene, with a harm of proposed the following device: Pharado, sitting in an one-nelariot, a crown on his bead and a

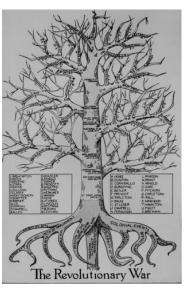


sword in his hand, passing through the divided | did not think it of sufficient importance to puraters of the Red Sea in pursuit of the Iraclites. | it on record; and nothing more was done, I be Rays from a pillar of fire in a cloud, expressive | lieve, until the spring of 1779. deffereou, you of the Divine presence and command, beaming know, soon went to Virginia; Franklin was









Proposed Great Seal of the United States

Courtesy, U.S. Library of Congress.

Also linked above: Images, quote and information from *Establishing a Federal Republic*, Library of Congress.

A note regarding the text, imaged above: In designing the proposed great seal, the committee selected symbols to signify "the Countries from which these States have been peopled." They chose a rose (England), a thistle (Scotland), a harp (Ireland), a fleur-de-lis (France), a lion (Holland) and a two-headed eagle (Germany).

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Proposed-Great-Seal-of-the-United-States

Battle of Saratoga

Image, Library of Congress.

Information, and quotes, from the National Park Services' web site on the Saratoga Battlefield.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Battle-of-Saratoga

Fall of Charleston - 12 May 1780

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

Linked in the above description: *Attack on Savannah, Oct. 8,1779*. Illustration by A.I. Keller. U.S. National Archives, image148-GW-1120.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-Fall-of-Charleston-12-May-1780

Letter of Surrender, Charleston

Facsimile of original letter, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Letter-of-Surrender-Charleston

Patriots of the Revolutionary War

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives, image 148-GW-378.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Patriots-of-the-Revolutionary-War



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George Washington - Early Years

Clip from "Greatest Heroes in History - Washington," Episode 6 of a BBC series which originally aired in 2002. Online, courtesy <u>BFI National Library</u>.

Executive Producer:

Alan Clements

Director:

Jane Quigley

Series Producer:

Melanie Jappy

A Wark Clements Production

View this asset at:

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George Washington - Revolutionary War General

Clip from "Greatest Heroes in History - Washington," Episode 6 of a BBC series which originally aired in 2002. Online, courtesy $\underline{\sf BFI\ National\ Library}.$

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View this asset at:

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George Washington - Later Years

Clip from "Greatest Heroes in History - Washington," Episode 6 of a BBC series which originally aired in 2002. Online, courtesy <u>BFI National Library</u>. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the series.

Executive Producer:

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View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/George-Washington-Later-Years